

V. REMARKS

Entry of the Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the Amendment: a) places the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; b) does not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration because the Amendment amplifies issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; and c) places the application in better form for appeal, should an Appeal be necessary. The Amendment is necessary and was not earlier presented because it is made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. The amendments to the subject claims do not incorporate any new subject matter into the claims. Thus, entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

In response to the outstanding Office Action, claim 1 has been amended. The basis of this amendment is from Figure 16 of the application. A film removing member shown in Figure 16 does not require a vertical part, an upper part formed in a horizontal direction from an upper end part of the vertical part and a lower part formed in the same direction as the horizontal direction from the lower end part of the vertical part which are mentioned in claim 1 before these amendments. Accordingly, the vertical part, the upper part and the lower part are deleted by this amendment.

Claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 10 -13 and 17-20 are rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Sada et al. (JP 11-160,891) as modified by Yanagisawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,406,589) Sato (U.S. Patent No. 5,993,547). Claims 12 and 20 are rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Sada et al. as modified by Yanagisawa and Sato as applied to claims 1, 4-6, 8, 10-13 and 17-20 and further in view of Sadohara et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0032705). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

(1) Sada et al (JPII-160891) disclose a thin film stripper comprising a solvent discharge part 3 for spraying a solvent on the edge of substrate G and upper/lower needle nozzle 51/52 established in the top-face/inferior-surface-of-tongue section

31/32, and also disclose that the solvent is supplied to the edge of the substrate G for stripping the resist film by using the thin film stripper.

(2) Yanagisawa (US 6,406,589) discloses an apparatus for etching of outermost periphery edge of silicon wafer comprising a rotatable table 3 for placing silicon wafer 1 and a quartz reactor tube 8 for plasma generation arranged closely to outermost periphery edge of silicon wafer 1 and also discloses that processing the outermost periphery edge of the silicon wafer 1 is carried out by plasma etching.

(3) Sato et al (US 5,993,547) discloses an edge rinse mechanism comprising a vacuum chuck 3a for sucking, holding and rotating a silicon wafer 1 on an upper surface, an exfoliating agent discharging nozzle 5 for discharging resist exfoliating agent 6 toward periphery portion 2b of resist film 2 formed on the wafer 1 and a controller 8c for controlling a suction pump 8b for sucking the atmosphere inside a cover 7 and also disclose that scattering of resist material and resist exfoliating agent 6 can be prevented by using the edge rinse mechanism.

(4) However, the citations abovementioned do not disclose or suggest a plasma supply part provided in a portion facing the predetermined portion for supplying plasma of a reactive gas to the film on the predetermined portion and a suction port provided facing to each other with said plasma supply part therebetween along a radial direction of the substrate for immediately sucking a plasma supplied from the plasma supply part, as is recited in amended claim 1.

According to the present invention, since a processing apparatus includes the plasma supply part provided in the portion facing the predetermined portion and suction port provided facing to each other with said plasma supply part therebetween along a radial direction of the substrate for immediately sucking a plasma supplied from the plasma supply part, after being supplied and removing the film, the plasma is immediately sucked by the suction port.

Consequently, the plasma does not diffuse into the surroundings. Accordingly, the present invention do not require, for example, the top-face section 31 and the inferior-surface-of-tongue section 32 of the solvent discharge part 3 which are disclosed in Sada et al., whereby entire structure of the apparatus can be compact.

Moreover, since the present invention further include the control section for controlling the suction pressure of the suction port and flow rate of the plasma supplied from the plasma supply part, slope of the sloped part in the outer peripheral film which is eroded by the plasma current can be changed.

Such an effect is unexpected result which can not be obtained in any of the cited inventions.

(5) The above described characteristic configuration of the present invention and effects are not disclosed in any of the cited inventions, which is not taught in any citations at all.

Accordingly, amended Claim 1 and the claims dependent thereon are beyond Section 103. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 1 as amended and discussed above. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art could not combine or modify the features of the applied art to arrive at the claimed invention because the applied art is devoid of all the features of the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 and the claims dependent therefrom are allowable over the applied art.

Claims 4, 6, 10, 12 and 13 are canceled and, as a result, the rejection as applied thereto is now moot.

Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

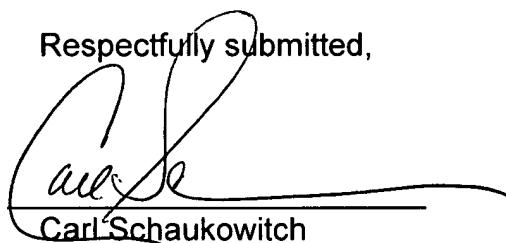
It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance over the prior art of record. Therefore, this Amendment is

believed to be a complete response to the outstanding Office Action. Further, Applicants assert that there are also reasons other than those set forth above why the pending claims are patentable. Applicants hereby reserve the right to set forth further arguments and remarks supporting the patentability of their claims, including the separate patentability of the dependent claims not explicitly addressed herein, in future papers.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure(s): Amendment Transmittal

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